

Remarks of Rep. James A. Leach
Chairman, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Hearing on “Avian Flu: Addressing the Global Threat”
Before the Committee on International Relations
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Perspective is always difficult to apply to issues of the day.

But it is self-evident that the greatest foreign policy issue of our time is neither the problem of war and peace between nation states nor the problem of terrorism, but rather the human vulnerability to disease that we all share. The tragic, global spread of the HIV virus and the threatening possibility of the first avian flu pandemic of the new century have begun to focus public attention on this fact. It may be that the magnitude of disease inflicted death is so awesome that we can't envision changing our budgetary and policy priorities to match the challenge. Yet what is self-evident is that we have the capacity to act. Failure to do so could be the single greatest failure of public policy in our lifetime.